

PERSONAL COMPUTER



FOCUS



\$1.00

VOL. IV NUMBER 8

AUGUST 1987

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE

COASTAL AREA ATARI USERS' GROUP

an independent computer users' group

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Corner....

by Lee Hutcheson

Good News for Rotary Dialers:

Last month I told how to turn off the Call Waiting feature with a touch tone phone for the duration of a call by dialing "*70". This is a handy feature to prevent data loss or dropping of carrier detect when you are using your modem. Unfortunately, the telephone company representative with whom I spoke didn't know how to turn off Call Waiting with rotary dialing. Since that time, I learned how to cancel call waiting with a rotary dial phone. Let's review the whole process to temporarily cancel call waiting before making a call.

1. Listen for dial tone.
2. Touch-tone: Dial *70
Rotary: Dial 1170
3. Listen for second dial tone.
4. Dial the number you want

Now, more good news--almost. Contrary to what I was told before, you are supposed to be able to cancel Call Waiting while a call is in progress. The big catch is you must be a subscriber to Three-Way Calling as well as Call Waiting. Assuming you have rushed out and subscribed to all these services, here are the procedures for temporarily canceling Call Waiting while a call is in progress.

1. Press receiver button for a half-second to put the call on hold.
2. Listen for a dial tone.
3. Touch-Tone: Dial *70.
Rotary: Dial 1170.
4. Press receiver button for

a half-second to return to original call.

WARNING: Putting the call on hold as described in step one will normally cause loss of carrier detect if the modems are already "talking." This will probably only be of use if you have made voice contact and subsequently decide to initiate modem contact. Additionally, this procedure will not work if a third party is already trying to reach you. Of course the best and "cheapest" way to solve this problem is the way I did. Cancel Call Waiting and your transmissions will never be disturbed. For the rest of you, I hope this information will be of help. Good luck!

Music To Type By:

Did you ever figure out a use for your 1010 recorder once you moved up to a disk drive? I know many of you have recorders sitting around gathering dust. Why not listen to music on it (or motivational tapes for you yuppies) while typing in those long programs from magazines or while writing your own programs? When in BASIC you need only type POKE 54018,52 to turn on the device. Then put in your favorite tape, press play, and listen to music while you type POKE 54018,60. NOTE: be sure to turn it off before running your program--it can interfere with some. Use your imagination. This POKE could be useful if written into many of your programs. For instance, an educational program teaching the kids spelling. Or perhaps as part of an adventure game--who says all clues must be written.

Quiz....

Just a short quiz for those who like them. I will give two free disks of your choice from the CAAUG library to the person with the earliest post marked correct answer to this

months quiz. Many on-line computer services offer Electronic Encyclopedia. What is the name of the most commonly used encyclopedia and who is its publisher. Send entries to: Computer, P. O. Box 5142, Biloxi, Ms 39534. I realize this question favors modem users, but the information is available from other sources. Besides, it might be fun to learn more about modems.

Rent Before You Buy

You may be wondering if a modem or perhaps a certain piece of software is really what you want. Your users' group may be able to help you find out. We have an Atari XM-301 modem which you can rent and see if telecommunications are for you. It comes with everything you need, including software, to be up and running in just a few minutes. And you don't have to worry about long distance charges since the best way to start is on local bulletin boards such as the Coastal Area BBS (388-3490). It's also a great place for downloading some good public domain software. And speaking of software; we also have software for rent. Titles include Blue Max, S.A.G.A. #2, Kennedy Approach, The Serpent's Star, Mig Alley Ace, Diskey, and Invitation To Programming. Check on this at the next meeting.

Desktop Publishing

Among the fastest growing areas of computer usage is Desktop Publishing. It is most appropriate, therefore, that this will be the feature topic of the August meeting. Be sure to be there!

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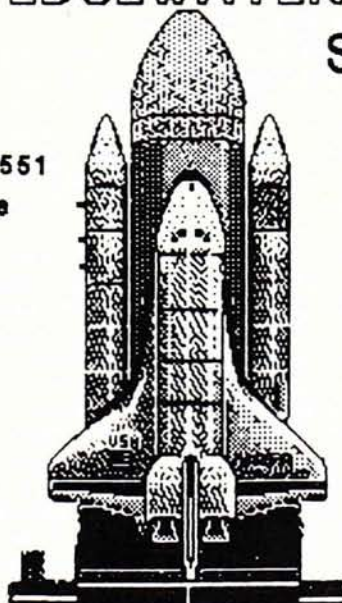
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AUTHORIZED ATARI 520/1040 ST DEALER!

Erratic Editorial

by David E. Warner

Well, it's summer, and seems like everybody is outside instead of playing with their computer. Well, almost everybody...you figure by this time of the year we are all tanned and healthy looking, right? Except for guys like me....keyboard fanatics who still get a sunburn from cutting the grass. Heck, it's the only time my skin sees daylight it seems! Oh yes, and Pamela does keep me interested in some of the more popular summer indoor sports too! Anyway, my only problems these days are IBM clones and hard drives. Somebody was singing about a land of confusion! Get one of these and find out. I love my purring little ST and Atari hard drive more and more each day. They just keep working right along, running the BBS.

And speaking of the BBS, things have picked up a bit on it. I think it is the online quizzes and polls, along with a couple of games that game along. I will be expanding that area as much as I can. People like to see their name in lights when they have scored well on one of these. If there is a subject you would like covered, just make up about 15 questions with at least 4 multiple choice answers, and I will put them in the correct format and get it on the board. Look for a second quiz on BBS functions, one on States and Capitals, and another on computers coming soon!

More of the
latest news!

News from Antic on Plato!

by Baron Sekiya, Hawaii

Just saw the Mega ST4 and the Laser printer this weekend here in Waikiki.

he Mega ST4

The Keyboard:

Very solid feeling keyboard. Very good keyboard feel. Not mushy. It doesn't click (ala IBM) or bind (ala Mac) and sort of feels like the keyboard of touch of a Zenith Z-100 (I didn't know what else to compare it to that I've used). You get a definite feel that the key has 'hit bottom' when you press it. Joystick ports on the rear of the keyboard recessed facing left & right. The mouse/joystick cord of the right port can be fed thru a groove under the right side like the bottom of some telephones run their cords. The kb connects to the mega via a 6 conductor phone-type cord that leads to the left side recess of the mega which also sports the cart port. It has wide feet under the rear of the keyboard. The kb is a little on the heavy side and the cord could be a little longer. Wish they put that cord connector on the front of the Mega.

The Main Housing:

A little bigger looking than I thought it would be. The color monitor sat on it with about 1" to spare on each side. It has a fan that could be heard in the quiet room but it wasn't loud or irritating. In fact I couldn't tell if the fan sound came from the mega or the Atari hard disk next to it. If you've seen photos of the mega then you know there are cooling slots on the top along the L & R edges. Near the left rear top there is a little hatch integrated into the slot design that pops open to reveal a compartment for 2 AA batteries. I presume it is for battery backed

clock in the mega. The drive is very quiet and smooth running. The power switch (just like the 1040's type) is on the rear panel along with reset and the usual ports including MIDI. The only ports not on the back are: cart, keyboard. There is a hatch marked "expansion port" on the back. Unfortunately didn't get to see the inside of the case.

New Additions:

The new ROMs were in the mega. You can hold down the mouse button on the down arrow of the window and it will scroll line by line (I heard it doesn't with the old ROMs). Not much else to say about the new ROMs.

The 'Options' drop-down window has a 'blitter' selection to toggle on or off the blitter chip. The blitter chip was in the mega but Gary Tramiel told some that none of the software there was "blitter-ready". But, I tried moving a screenfull of NeoChrome pictures and it seemed smoother with the blitter 'selected'.

The computer did 'bomb-out' a couple times when I fooled around with Pub Partner on the screen. 3-4 cherry bombs came out forcing a reset. Not sure if the problem was the mega or Pub Partner itself. The mega was connected to the Atari Hard Disk.

The Atari Laser Printer:

The ST is connected to a box that looks like Atari's modem/80 col. card box. It says 'Laser' on it and has a light on it's front. It's job is to connect to the ST's DMA port then connect to a DB25 connector to the Laser Printer. The small box also has a second DMA port so you can daisy-chain to a hard disk.

The Atari Laser (AL) is about the size of an Apple LW+. has both a sheet tray and single sheet feeder on the front end. The other end is

where the small box plugs into. It seems to eject the output out the top (didn't get to see it in action since I got there very late). Saw some samples and they looked VERY GOOD. Nice dense blacks, in fact so dense that it looked like the toner was starting to 'cake-up' on the paper. Didn't get to see graphics since they didn't have the proper printer-driver for the AL. It has the same universal operating symbols as found on the Apple LW: paper jam, busy indicators, etc. Looks like a real winning combo w/the megaST.

Game Machines:

Also displayed were the XE game machine w/keyboard, redesigned 2600 and 7800 systems. Wasn't very impressed with them. The XE played 8-bit computer carts, the 2600 played old 2600 carts, the 7800 played old 7800 carts, although it did have a better joystick rather than the old high-tech joystick. The XE machine had a very nice light gun that plugs into the joystick port.

More stuff:

The megaST2 when released will have empty sockets so you can upgrade it to a 4meg machine. Megast will be very limited quantity end of Aug w/more coming in Sept. Most megas will be going to software/hardware developers.

Laser:

Atari is talking with Adobe to arrange for use of PostScript language w/the laser printer. Since it's a dumb printer I would assume the postscript will be in the St & not the laser printer.

Microsoft Write:

Microsoft is doing the development of MS Write (a Mac port of MS Word v 1.05). It is VERY LOW priority for Microsoft. They send a copy to Atari who checks it for bugs then returns it to MS for debugging. Atari then waits a month for MS to send a newer version for debug

testing. Back to MS for another month, etc.

The Atari PC:

Not at the show but they said an October shipping date is possible.

SX212 modem:

May be released in Sept., but Atari's Gary Tramiel was rather hesitant about the answer.

XEP80 (80 col for 8 bit):

Should be shipping in August.

XF551 (8-bit ds/dd drive):

This 360K 5.25" disk drive for the 8-bit Atari's should be released by the end of August. It will have Atari's new ADOS developed by OSS.

DTP:

Ready-Set-Go! v3.0 by Manhattan Graphics should be ready in about 90 days. It is an ENHANCED version of the Mac RSG v3.0 that has more features than the Mac.

DBASIC Update for ST Programmers

An updated version of DBasic has arrived. If you are interested in a copy and have already gotten your manual, contact Dave Warner. If you have not gotten a copy, then it is available for \$10.

Future updates will include converting a DBasic file into a TOS binary file (of course there will be a program to do the opposite!).

How about a mod for your 1050?

1050 FRONT PANEL SELECT SWITCHES by Dave Jones, G.R.A.S.P. Member

Ever wanted to temporarily

add a drive to your system and needed to change the drive select switches but had to disconnect the drive in order to get access to the switches? Would you like to format and write to the back of a disk without having to cut a notch? Could you appreciate the assurance of knowing that the software that you are running can not possibly format or write over data on your disk? With this hardware modification on your 1050 Disk Drive you can select with front panel controls any of four drive number designations. Also, you have manual control of write protect and write enable without the need of disk notches and tabs.

Parts and Supplies:

S1, S2, S3 - Radio Shack SPST micro miniature toggle switches CAT No. 275-624 (\$1.59 each). 1 resistor - any value from 500 ohm to 1500 ohm. 3-18" jumper wires / 1-12" / 1-6" / 1-3" jumper wire. Solder / Electrical tape.

Disassemble drive, remove front panel. Drill three holes into panel each 3/16" diameter. The hole for the write protect switch (S3) should be located as far left as possible on the left side of the panel. The holes for the drive select switches may be located anywhere on the lower right beveled edge of the front panel. These two switches will be easier to operate if located at the same level and more than 1.5" apart.

Install switches into holes in front panel. Secure each switch with one lockwasher on the inside and one nut on the outside. The switch on the far left, the write protect switch (S3), should be installed with the two solder lugs oriented downward. Of the remaining two switches the switch to the left will be designated S1, the switch to the right is S2. S1 and S2 should be oriented so that

the solder lugs are to the left. Test that the write protect switch (S3) toggles vertically and that S1 and S2 toggle horizontally. Tighten all nuts. Hold front panel up to the drive mechanism to check for proper clearance around switch solder lugs.

Remove circuit board from case. Push the plastic hooks apart to free the circuit board. It may not be necessary to disconnect the molex connectors. Just rest the drive mechanism on top of the metal shield. Holding "the works" as a unit, lift up and flip it over to expose the underside of the circuit board. At the rear corner near the I/O connector there are six pins attached to the drive select switch. Four pins share the same solder pad. Attach a wire 18" in length to one of these four pins, solder, and label the other end of this wire

"GROUND". To each of the other pins not part of the four, attach wires 18" in length and solder. For the wire connected to the pin closest to the I/O connector, label the free end of this wire "1". The free end of the remaining wire should be labeled "2". Turn the circuit board back over and locate the molex connector labeled J11 on the board. It is the one closest to the front of the drive in the long group of molex connectors. Cut the second wire from the front of this connector at a point 1.5" from the connector. Strip a small amount of insulation from the free end of the wire attached to the connector. To this attach a wire 12" in length and solder

the resistor to the free end of this wire. The wire that was cut from the molex connector will not be used, so just insulate the end with electrical tape. Use tape or heat shrink tubing to insulate the connections at each end of the 12" wire.

Replace "the works" into the lower case. Be sure to line

up plastic pins and hooks for circuit board and place drive mechanism so that it locks into position over the metal pins. Route the three long jumper wires under the circuit board over to the right side so that the free ends are hanging over the right side of the lower case. The wire with the resistor attached should be routed along the left side of the case and the end going out the front of the case.

Bring the front panel with the switches mounted close to the front opening of the drive. Complete the wiring to the switches as follows: Solder wire end labeled "1" to a solder lug on S1. Solder wire end labeled "2" to a solder lug on S2. Solder free end of resistor to a solder lug on S3. Solder wire end labeled "GROUND" and a wire 3" in length to the unused solder lug on S2. Solder the free end of the 3" wire and a wire 6" in length to the unused solder lug on S1. Solder the free end of the 6" wire to the unused solder lug on S3. Insulate exposed connections with electrical tape. Replace front panel and top cover while routing wires away from areas where they could cause problems.

Switch Positions:

The drive select switches on the back of the drive must be set to the "DRIVE 1" position. S3 Write Protect Switch - down is normal (protected) - up is write enable.

DRIVE 1 - S1 LEFT - S2 LEFT
DRIVE 2 - S1 RIGHT - S2 LEFT
DRIVE 3 - S1 RIGHT - S2 RIGHT
DRIVE 4 - S1 LEFT - S2 RIGHT

Battery Backup for your computer

COULD YOU USE A BATTERY
BACK UP?

By Dave Porter

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Newsletter of the New Orleans
Atari Users Group

When I first got my ATARI 400 in 1981 I for some reason felt portability would be nice. That is, not be limited to the old fashion AC line cord. I did rig a 5 volt DC power Jack and the kids could play Pac Man in the Van on vacation using a portable TV. Of course once I realized I needed the very popular 800 and the 810 disk drive I kind of forgot the portability idea and time went on. Then one day I bought the new Indus GT disk drive and after carelessly plugging the Atari transformer into the Indus by

mistake I realized the Indus used 11.5 volts DC. Once again the wheels turned and I realized the kids could now use not only the computer with cartridges but also games on disk.....Big Deal!!!!

Actually at the time that was all my Atari meant to me, was a toy for the kids and occasionally I used it to write some letter my secretary didn't have time to do and since I dictated everything typing skills were not that important to me. Now things are different. I have become completely devoted to my ATARI collection of computers. When I first got the new 800 XL any idiot could see you could not accidentally plug the wrong transformer into the XL. Instead the transformer stated right on top 5 volts DC. I again become interested in battery power and proved to myself this was rather handy even if not practical. One question kept me from bragging to all my friends that my XL could run batteries.....Why???

Just recently somebody proposed in a newsletter article simple dry cell battery back up in case of some power problem from the good ol' utility company. New York they call it "brown outs". Actually, in the New Orleans area we are lucky I

really don't remember ever losing data to a brown out and since I don't risk using my computer during thunder storms I haven't lost power ever while computing. Additionally, I feel lucky, but until someone gave me a surge protector I always felt I needed something else first.

So then what is this article for? You may want to consider battery back up power for the reason I built one for a friend of mine. His 2 year kid recently unplugged his computer with two hours worth of composing and key strokes in memory. I once told my wife she could use the extension cord (that at the time had my computer plugged into it) and with out a thought let her unplug my computer with 13 pages of word processing document in memory unsaved of course. For those reasons or if you happen to feel unexpected power failure is likely to ruin your important work before you save it this may be for you.

The article I referred to above unfortunately I can't locate to give credit to. However, that article was very short and unfinished. In fact it may even be dangerous. In this article the author suggested using four cell battery holder and shorting out one cell so that you actually used only three batteries. the thought here was to use standard flashlight batteries which are suppose to be 1.5 volts and three would provide 4.5 volts. Since the XL/XE computers use a 5.0 volt supply four flashlight batteries would provide 6.0 volts and therefore too much power. This is all true but his comments in closing the article tells the user to beware. "These batteries tend to get hot if you compute with these three cells connected for any length of time." ??? Why? Because standard dry cells were not meant to be recharged and

when connected in the manner he suggested that is precisely what was being done. A simple diode would have done the trick but still there was one additional problem. The author said the batteries would preserve memory but due to the lower voltage would not power the normal cpu display. Again this was true but again a simple fix is indicated.

Hence my suggestion lets you use four nickle cadmium rechargeable batteries. These four batteries are rated at 1.2 volts per cell and therefore will give 4.8 volts when used in series. (End to end) Sure these batteries are more expensive but for less than the cost of a box of cheap no name disks you can do the whole thing and only once. Flashlight batteries will only work their life cycle and then need to be replaced. About \$10 even at the most expensive retail prices should do this project. A lot less if you shop right.

Before you blindly do this, or before any of you more technical users question if I did my homework, let me say this only to give you some confidence in the idea. I am a degreed engineer and have attended schools on nickel cadmium batteries for both application and maintenance theory. And over the last 15 years I have developed several ni-cad (nickel cadmium) circuits for use in medical, marine, and field monitoring instruments for the oil production industry. In fact one typical benefit for using a ni- cad parallel system is it is one of the more reliable 1e voltage stabilizers available. That is this circuit will provide excellent protection from small increases or decreases in supply voltage thus protecting your computer not just the data.

I experimented with several complex circuits but this application is so straight

forward not really necessary. The most challenging thoughts were really limited to where did I want to make my battery connection. I considered putting my double A (AA) 500ma batteries inside the XL/XE case but space is limited. For simplicity sake I suggest the following method.

Use two crimp splice connectors. These are used in several automotive applications, everything from trailer light connections to the new cyclops stop light connections. All you need is two such connectors from Radio Shack or automotive parts house, a four cell battery holder, four nicad batteries, and a small length of flexible zip cord wire.

Take a small hobby type knife or thin knife blade and split the insulation along the grove of your Atari power supply about six inches from the din connector that actually plugs into the back of the computer. If you do this you will not have damaged the insulation in any way but rather separated each of the two main wires supplying the 5.0 volts DC to your computer. No wire skinning is necessary on the power supply if you use these crimp type wire splices. One side of the power supply cord is clearly marked with a

white stripe. This stripe is the plus 5.0 volt connection and should with the crimp splice be connected to a short length of wire to the plus end of your batteries. If you do this correctly success is guaranteed. Just make the other connection to the opposite wire and opposite end of your batteries and you should be finished.

You may get by on the smaller double A size batteries but they will only power the typical XL/XE for about 23 minutes. More than enough time to save your data during short duration failures.

(Remember your disk drive won't work either). If your failure is limited to some careless unplugging at the wall, this would be plenty of time to reclaim your system without loss of data. On the other hand, you could use some surplus batteries found in your unused grass clippers out in the garage, these sub C size batteries will provide complete computing power for up to one full hour or more. Additionally these batteries will not over charge and can be left connected permanently. Like your electric toothbrush, connected like this the batteries will receive a very small charging current both during and after computing and should be fully charged, ready and available at all times. Figure the charging current to be approx. 65 milliamps with your computer

off and about 58 milliamps with it on. This amount of charging current should not put any noticeable strain on your power supply and falls right in accepted limits for what is called a "C 10" charging rate. That is ten percent of the rated batteries capacity. The slight variance in charging current is due to the small drop in output voltage when the computer is operational. I have used this setup for several weeks now and have enjoyed the confidence I have knowing my wife won't place my system in failure mode using the vacuum cleaner, and your two year old can pull on my wall cord without me having a heart attack.

I have not seen the new ICD MIO ram card that uses the parallel bus on the XL/XE but I understand it has its own power supply. Since we are using extended ram with this card, battery backup may be beneficial here as well.

Coastal Area BBS

601-388-3490

Software Review...

CARDIAC ARREST! by Vic Albino, BRACE/STDIO from Puget Sound Atari Newsletter Mad Scientist Software 2063 North 820 West Pleasant Grove, UT 84062 (801) 785-3028 \$69 For Both the 8-Bit and ST Computers

CARDIAC ARREST! is one of the most realistic computer simulations I have ever seen on a personal computer. You assume the role of an emergency room physician leading a highly skilled team of medical professionals. Whether or not your patients live depends solely on the decisions you make. The drugs, procedures, and

laboratory work are realistically depicted. Yet despite all the realism, this simulator is remarkably easy to use. This makes the program both highly educational and fun to play.

One of the most fascinating things about CARDIAC ARREST! is that it is targeted to two entirely different audiences. On the one hand, it is advertised as a training simulator for medical personnel such as physicians, nurses, ambulance drivers, emergency medical technicians, military corpsmen and others who can use it as a training aid to attain ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) certification. However, it also reports to

be entertainment software for laymen who would like to try their hand at playing doctor. After evaluating CARDIAC ARREST! from both perspectives, I have come to the conclusion that it actually manages to fulfill its claims to both groups. I was assisted in my evaluation by several ACLS certified physicians and nurses, many of whom appreciated the

entertainment value of the program as much as its educational aspects. In fact, it is difficult to separate the learning from the fun; and this, I believe is one quality inherent in truly good educational software.

You are given the opportunity to choose from a database of 45 different patients with various kinds of medical problems. You may pick an easy, difficult or pediatric patient; or you may select a specific type of disease to treat. There are cases of ventricular fibrillation, myocardial infarction, hypoglycemia, hypothermia, narcotic overdose, coma, and many others. What is more, each patient reacts differently each time you revive him so that there are many more than 45 different cases on the disk.

After providing initial treatment, you may decide to transfer your patient to ICU (Intensive Care Unit) if

you think he is ready. At this time you will be told the results of your orders on the patient, and given suggestions for improvement in your care plan. One nice feature is the ability to re-select the same case again so that you can try to improve the patient outcome. This immediate feedback and second chance really facilitate the learning process.

Fortunately, the simulation is not carried out in real time. Every order and press of the return key advances the time one minute. For a beginner, this is essential since much time is taken up looking for treatments and drug dosages in the manual. Before too long, however, one begins to memorize the correct procedures and drugs, and the manual becomes less important. The program accepts completely typed English commands, common abbreviations, and generic and brand names of cardiac

drugs. This is no multiple choice quiz. It is a simulation of a real treatment situation. Either you know what to do or you don't. You can make errors, and, if they are blatant enough, the nurse may question them. However, just like in real life, she is not there to tell you what to do. It is your responsibility to direct the treatment team. Treatment flowsheets are provided with the documentation, but doctors usually have a nurse who keeps track of this important information, and they did not want to leave the keyboard to write it down.

Speaking of the manual, it is excellent. The author, Bruce Argyle, M.D., has done an exceptional job of presenting difficult material in a very clear and easily readable form. There are sections on diagnosis, treatment, laboratory procedures, pharmacology, and cardiac anatomy. The section on reading EKG's is especially helpful. The 52 page manual is nicely bound in an 8-1/2x11 three-ring binder and even includes a pronouncing glossary.

In summary, whether you are a health care professional seeking ACLS certification, or a layman who wants to learn about one of the most interesting aspects of medicine and have fun at the same time, CARDIAC ARREST! is the program for you. There are many computer simulations available today. In some you fly a plane, in others you command a submarine or run a nuclear power plant. Still others put you in charge as the administrator of a city or even of an entire country. However, CARDIAC ARREST! is the only simulation I know where you can gain real medical knowledge while "saving lives." It represents a quantum leap in interactive medical education.

The "Look and Feel" Dilema...

THINKING ABOUT COMPUTERS by
Bob Haynes The Access Key

MAMA DON'T 'LOW NO
LOOK-AND-FEEL HERE

At a recent APESIG meeting, your talented Newsletter Editor was treating the assembled multitude to an on screen look at some code he had written in C. Some of the members were about to step outdoors for some real excitement - watching the grass grow - when he cut away from the listing and ran the program. Instant electrification. On the screen there appeared a well-known public domain graphics demo written in BASIC about five or six years ago. Talk about clones. Mr Stomp's creation LOOKS like the original. It LOADS TO THE SCREEN like the original. The Doublemint twins are easier to tell apart. But it is written in a language as different from BASIC as Italian is from English.

At the same meeting, ACCESS Treasurer Kim Beatty made favorable mention of an article in COMPUTE! magazine. The article showcased a half dozen versions of a program, each written in a different ST language.

As anecdotes, the foregoing instances won't draw any chuckles. But they are relevant to the latest wrinkle in the Piracy Wars: Look- and-feel. The software industry needs to throw a necktie party for the idiot child who came up with this non-concept. In case you have been vacationing in Bora Bora the past six months, our peerless courts have ruled that a program that looks and feels like an already-published program violates copyright laws.

Period. Beginning of (prison) sentence. So, we have Lotus suing a couple of companies on the grounds of look-and-feel. In turn, Lotus is being sued for looking and feeling like VisiCalc.

Guys! Guys! Listen up! The time to turn upon your lawyers is now. Throw the rascals out. Don't let them do this to you - sue one another into bankruptcy, that is. The supreme irony may come when a clone maker sues an "original" programmer for copying the clone's improvements.

Let's face facts. Look-and-feel is one monumental hunk of legal Swiss cheese. Start with the front end. Now that they have been alerted, clone makers will find that changing the look of a program is surpassing easy. A different color background, an altered character set, two-column menus (rather than one), a rearranged order of items on the menu, changes in nomenclature. Thus, "Press SPACEBAR to continue" becomes "HIT escape TO GO ON." And so on, almost ad nauseum. As to the "feel" of a program, what

does that nebulous term mean, exactly? Input method? Order of commands? Output or product? Bells and whistles? Documentation? As Humpty Dumpty said to Alice in Wonderland, "Words mean whatever I say they mean." Humpty Dumpty was obviously a judge.

No matter. A couple of days' work by a hack programmer can change the "feel" of a program to the point where the "original" programmer can't recognize his/her own brainchild.

Recall the clone mentioned at the beginning. We have a plainly absurd state of affairs. Your editor would be subject to a lawsuit if his "copy" written in entirely different code were not in the public domain. But the

clone maker who inserts a few cosmetic changes without altering the essence of the code would go scot free.

Another joker in the deck is the word AND. It's surprising that some defense attorney somewhere has not grabbed hold of the significance of that little connective. A plaintiff must prove that both look AND feel have been ravished by the brutish clone maker. This renders the clone maker's job twice as easy. Change the "look"; change the "feel". Take your choice. And the plaintiff's case joins the baby alligators in the sewer. If I seem to have a soft spot for clone makers,

that's because I do. Why? Because clone makers have improved the breed in both software and hardware. They have helped to force prices down to what they SHOULD be. And they have provided competition that has forced the originators to improve their own wares much faster than they would do otherwise/have done so. (As a footnote, isn't competition what made America great? Isn't it UNAMERICAN to stifle competition - as the software and hardware pros and their legal hit men are trying to do?)

We know that clones are superior to the "original" products, either in lower price or in quality - usually both. We know this because the makers of the "original" products claim that the copies are inferior. Note the consistent use in this piece of quotations marks around the word "original". About 99 and 44/100% of all "original" program code is derived from earlier sources. But do these sanctimonious hypocrites acknowledge their debts to their sources? Is the Pope a Buddhist?

****Programming challenge:** Create a program that looks like an existing program and feels like that program - but does something altogether different.

****Question to ponder:** Springboard has openly stated that it will not release an Atari version of NEWSROOM.

Could Springboard sue a company that published a NEWSROOM clone for Atari? Could they loose the case?

[One thing I would like to add: it is to the advantage of the USER if different programs of the same type have the same command structure, similar menus, etc. It makes life easier if he doesn't have to learn a completely new set of commands. Y'know, two different models of car with standard transmissions have pretty much the same "feel" - steering wheel and gearshift are in the same place - thank God! Is there a case for a lawsuit there? - The Access Key Editor]

Your computer and Amateur Radio...

ATARI AMATEUR RADIO INTERACTION

By Ed Glambotski Reprinted from SLO-POKES, the newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Atari Computer Enthusiasts

(Editor's note: I know there's been a lot of interest over the past couple of years about breaking your Ataris free of the phone lines that bind them, allowing your words to roam free over the airwaves. Unfortunately, in the discussions about packet radio on local BBS's, there's been a minimum of hard facts thrown about. The following article will give those interested a good introduction on the subject of packet radio. Also, an amateur radio-using friend of mine told me a couple of weeks ago that the FCC had modified their license requirements for use

of some of the packet radio bands, so it should be easier for the average person to get involved in this fast growing computer application...)

The question often comes up: "What else can we use my Atari computer for besides games?" Perhaps we pose that question in an attempt to justify having a home computer. On the other hand, it may be a continuing challenge and excuse to play with these expensive toys. Regardless of the personal drive, "Packet Radio" is another fun utility for the computer. What is packet radio, you ask? Well, let me lay it on you.

Packet radio is a utility whereby the computer interacts with an amateur radio transceiver. Don't stop reading because you are not a Ham radio operator, because this is technologically interesting in a way a computer does for you which thus programmed. Packet radio is a fancy form of radioteletype. It requires your Atari computer, a packet control until (called a TNC, and commercially available at a number of third party companies) and an amateur transceiver. A disk drive and a printer are helpful, but not essential. Packet radio gets its name from the fact that each transmission consists of a "packet" of digital data, including call signs or the originating station, the destination station, and any relaying stations in between.

There's virtually no interference. When you're connected with someone, your TNC will recognize and interpret only those packets addressed to you. You'll hear the other going by, but nothing will show up on your screen, since each packet is a brief burst, there's room in between your packets for packets of other stations. So, one frequency can support several messages simultaneously (time

sharing). The TNC will also ignore any packet that doesn't "add up right". Part of the coding in each packet is a "checksum" that your computer reads. If the packet is garbled in any way, the checksum will be wrong and your TNC will refuse it. Ok, now what do we use this lashup for?

All this adds up to a system for message transfer virtually error free for at least the following tasks: ---Packet Bulletin Board Systems of any distance, leaving out Ma Bell (and her tab). ---Electronic Mail - Sent/Received - During these activities, you need not be at the station at the time of transmission. emergency traffic (fire, earthquake, etc.) information can be sent error free. ---Up/downloading computer programs. In summery, I might say the user can transfer information between stations without the need of the telephone system (twisted pair) at a baud rate of up to 9600. Amateurs are using this means internationally now, and it is just a matter of time before CB radio users take off with it also.

**Give Your 8-bit
Multitasking!!!!
Capability....**

WHAT'S A LINK?
By Bob Crowell
THE R.I. REPORTER

Like many of you who are reading this, I have more than one Atari 8-bit system. In my "Computer Room", two systems are set up side-by-side in an L-shaped arrangement, so by simply turning my chair, I can use either keyboard.

In my own version of 8-bit "multi-tasking", quite often

one computer is booted up as a Word-Processor and the other is booted up with EXPRESS! terminal software. As such, I can capture any text while on-line with a BBS, condense or alter it in some way in the word-processor, and then re-upload it in a more polished form, all without logging off whatever BBS I was on.

Unfortunately, this has always involved a lot of disk-swapping between systems; not difficult, but rather inconvenient if you do it a lot. I have always felt there was a need to be able to link two independent systems, but there has been no way for me to accomplish it...until I created "LINK".

LINK is a relatively simple switch-box that allows me to switch ONE disk drive between TWO separate Atari 8-bit computers. Since this isn't intended as a "construction"-type article, I won't get into circuit diagrams or specific electrical precautions to take, but I will discuss what I did in more general terms. If you think you'd like to tackle the construction of a LINK, you can contract me through this newsletter, or on the RIACE BBS, for more details.

I had determined some time ago that even though the standard Atari serial I/O cable has thirteen connections, only FIVE of them are used by the computer to communicate with disk drives and many other peripherals! (Data In, Data Out, Ground, 5v./Ready, and Command) A 5-Pole, Double-Throw switch and the proper connectors are the only things needed.

The best way for you to visualize this device would be by comparing it to the standard switchbox most of you use to connect your Atari to a TV: with that switch in one position, your computer's

RF output is connected to the TV's antenna input, and you see the computer's display; with the switch in the other position, your actual Antenna (or Cable) is connected to the TV's antenna input for regular TV watching. That switchbox happens to contain a Double-Pole, Double-Throw switch to switch the two antenna wires, while the type of switchbox I'm describing now requires a 5-Pole, Double-Throw switch, to switch the five wires in the serial I/O cable.

The easiest way to make my device would have been to use three I/O cables, cutting one plug off each, and just soldering the appropriate wires at the cut ends to the switch. Then, the switched cable would plug into the drive, and the other two cables would go to their respective computers. That would have worked just fine; but I chose another route.

I happened to have an old, broken 835 modem, which had 2 I/O ports built in, and which would provide me with a snazzy case for my device at the same time. I decided to cannibalize it, totally isolate the ports, build my switch inside, and use half of an old I/O cable to connect to the drive. It actually turned out better than I'd hoped; I didn't even have to drill any new holes in the case! The switch protruded exactly where the power switch had been on the old modem, and with the addition of some stick-on letters (I covered the "Atari 835" with the word "LINK" using the press-on letters from a videocassette), it looked like a stock Atari item!

I assigned my old Atari 810 drive (set up as Drive #2) as my LINK drive, and it sits between the two systems, next to my LINK box. Now, with the switch set to the right-hand position, I can capture text on-line and save it to D2: ... then, I slide the switch

to the left-hand position and load the same text into my word-processor from D2: ... All without touching the disk!

By the way, since the 810 "parks" its read/write head on track 39 when not Busy, I leave a disk in the drive all the time now, so LINK is always ready to go. (Some disk drives leave the head at the position where it last read or wrote, and if the drive powered up in that condition, it could "trash" the data on the disk.)

Because I already had a disk drive connected to each of the computers, it was appropriate that I assigned the LINK drive as Drive #2, but it should be noted that this same LINK device would allow the use of a single drive between two computers WITHOUT any other drives. These days, when Atari 8-bit computers are available for \$50 or less, it might come in handy to be able to share a (relatively) more expensive disk drive! However, if you do this, I caution you that you must be VERY careful when switching between computers, since any open disk files combined with disk swapping could effectively DESTROY the data on your disks. Be forewarned!

LINK turned out to be a incredibly simple and cheap device that really makes my computing more convenient, and hence, a lot more fun! And isn't that what Home Computing all about?

Bits and Pieces...

Interactive MicroSystems is offering a new product called "Font Partner". It will allow users to easily create printer and screen fonts for

SoftLogik's Publishing Partner, and should be available by the time you read this.

Interactive MicroSystems
P.O. Box 1188
Canyon Country, CA
91351-2600
(805) 298-7357

Terrific Corp. is the manufacturer of 1 meg upgrades and internal clock cards for the Atari ST series. They are offering discounts for users group members of 25% on EZRAM 520 memory upgrades and Ztime 520 or 1040 clock cards. They also offer a 20% discount on the X-10 powerhouse controller for 8 bit users and a 20% discount for the Z-port Digital I/O controller for the Atari ST series.

In addition, they carry 3' and 6' Atari drive cables which can also be sold at a discount to members. They expect to release more Atari products in the future. For more information, contact:

Terrific Corp.
17 St. Mary's Ct.
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 232-2317

Seventeen Ways to Kill Almost Any Organization.....

1. Don't attend meetings. But if you do, arrive late.
2. Be sure to leave before the meeting is closed.
3. Never have anything to say at the meetings: wait until you get outside.
4. When at meetings, vote to do everything, then go home and do nothing.
5. The next day, find fault with the officers and members.
6. Take no part in the organization's affairs.

7. Be sure to sit in t back so you can talk things over with a friend.
8. Get all the organization will give you, but don't give the organization anything back in return.
9. Never ask anyone to join the organization.
10. At every opportunity, threaten to resign and try to get others to do the same.
11. Talk cooperation, but don't cooperate.
12. If asked to help, say you haven't the time.
13. Never read anything pertaining to the organization.
14. Never accept an office, as it is easier to criticize than to do things.
15. If appointed to a committee, never give any time or service to this committee.
16. If you receive a renewal notice, ignore it.
17. Don't do any more than you have to, and when others use their abilities to help the cause, howl because t' organization is run by clique.

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